



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Richard D. Nyklewicz, Jr.

Chairman, Finance & Audit Committee

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FUNDING RESTORED FOR PROGRAMS & SERVICES DEMANDED BY RESIDENTS

Finance & Audit Committee nearing completion of major work on County Executive's budget proposal

Committee confronted with County Executive revenue projections that never materialized

Milwaukee, WI – The Milwaukee County Board Finance and Audit Committee's amending of the 2008 County Budget is nearing completion. Preserving County-provided services are among the main concerns in the 2008 County Budget that will be adopted by the full County Board on November 5. "We have been responsible in restoring a lot of the important programs and services requested by our constituents," said Supervisor Richard D. Nyklewicz, Jr., Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee. "We're listening to the true wishes of Milwaukee County residents."

Mass Transit remains one of the highest priorities for the County Board. So far, the Finance and Audit Committee has unanimously approved the restoration of thirteen transit route segments that were cut in the County Executive's 2008 Recommended Budget. A Budget Amendment was also unanimously approved to avoid a fare increase for the Milwaukee County Transit System's Transit Plus paratransit service. The County Executive called for an increase from \$3.25 to \$4 per ride. Transit Plus provides rides for individuals with a disabling illness or condition – including many senior citizens – that are unable to use the Milwaukee County Transit System buses.

As in years past, the Committee restored funding for several **Human Services** programs, including prevention services to reduce drug, alcohol, and substance abuse in the community; the Impact 2-1-1 line, an important phone number that helps County residents with non-life threatening emergency situations; and the Interim Disability Assistance Program. Funding was restored and increased for the Youth Sports Authority, a preventive program to help children become productive members of society through sports activities, rather than ending up in the State's juvenile correctional system, which is far more costly for County taxpayers. The University of Wisconsin Extension Service was also restored after being discontinued in the County Executive's proposal.

In the **Parks Department**, the Committee voted to restore \$3.5 million, including funding for multiple Parks Maintenance Worker, Special Events, and Community Center positions that would have been abolished in the County Executive's proposal. The restored funding includes \$650,000 to fulfill major parks maintenance needs that the County Executive continues to ignore. Eighteen positions were restored for the **Child Support Enforcement** operations, along with a paralegal to handle large case loads in the **District Attorneys** office and more than a dozen **Courts** positions requested by the Chief Judge.

In reviewing and amending the 2008 County Budget, the Committee was confronted with **overly optimistic revenue projections from the County Executive**, who was counting on several million dollars of State revenue that never materialized in the final version of the State Budget approved this week. "Most notably, the County Executive was banking on an additional \$1 million in Youth Aids, \$2 million in Courts funding and \$1 million in Shared Revenue that, in the end, did not become a reality. He was certainly not conservative in his revenue expectations from the State," said Supervisor Nyklewicz.

The Finance and Audit Committee also voted to **increase the County's contingency fund** by \$3 million, primarily to mitigate the State revenues that never materialized, and due to concerns that the County may not realize the County Executive's anticipated \$2 million in savings for replacing the Community Correctional Center with GPS monitoring. "The Walker administration failed to include a comprehensive plan for achieving this transition," Supervisor Nyklewicz stated. "In addition, the County Executive is banking on \$11 million in savings from issuing 25-year Pension Obligation Bonds that, as proposed by Walker, are not currently allowed under state law."

Including amendments that have passed the Finance and Audit Committee through October 26, the 2008 Budget, if adopted, would raise the tax levy by \$7,975,978, or 3.31%. Under this scenario, the average City of Milwaukee homeowner would see the County portion of their property tax bill go up approximately \$23 in 2008 if their property increased in value 3% during the past year. "Many homeowners with flat property values would see their County property tax bill increase by only three dollars," Supervisor Nyklewicz added.

The County Board's annual Public Hearing on the County Executive's 2008 Recommended Budget is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, October 29, 2007, at the Washington Park Senior Center. The Finance and Audit Committee will meet one more time, on Wednesday, October 31, to consider final amendments to the 2008 Budget. The full County Board will consider all amendments passed by the Finance and Audit Committee, and any other amendments from Supervisors, when adopting the 2008 County Budget on Monday, November 5 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 200 of the Milwaukee County Courthouse.

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